



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702

## FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ON AMENDMENT 5 (ROCK SHRIMP) TO THE FMP FOR THE SHRIMP FISHERY OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC REGION**

NOAA Fisheries announces that it has published a notice of availability for Amendment 5 to the Fishery Management Plan for the Shrimp Fishery of the South Atlantic Region. Written comments must be received on or before September 23, 2002.

Amendment 5 would:

Establish a limited access program for the rock shrimp fishery in the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) off Georgia and off the east coast of Florida (limited access area).

Establish a minimum mesh size for a rock shrimp trawl net in the limited access area.

Require the use of an approved vessel monitoring system (VMS) by vessels allowed to fish for rock shrimp in the limited access program.

Require an operator of a vessel in the rock shrimp fishery in the EEZ off the southern Atlantic states (North Carolina through the east coast of Florida) to have an operator permit.

The intended effects are to minimize additional increases in harvesting capacity in the rock shrimp fishery; reduce

the bycatch of small, unmarketable rock shrimp; enhance compliance with fishery management regulations; improve protection of essential fish habitat, including an area that contains the last 20 acres of intact *Oculina* coral remaining in the world; and ensure the long-term economic viability of the rock shrimp fishery.

Comments on the Amendment 5 should be sent to Peter Eldridge, Southeast Regional Office, NMFS, 9721 Executive Center Drive N., St. Petersburg, FL 33702. Comments may also be sent to Peter Eldridge via FAX to (727) 570-5583. Comments will not be accepted if submitted via e-mail or the Internet.

Request for Amendment 5 should be sent to the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council, One Southpark Circle, Suite 306, Charleston, SC 29407-4699; telephone: (843) 571-4366; FAX: (843) 769-4520; e-mail: [safmc@noaa.gov](mailto:safmc@noaa.gov). Request for the proposed rule should be sent to Peter Eldridge.

NOAA Fisheries is an agency of the Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.